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PRESS RELEASE:

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Huge variations in public sector spending on energy, with some paying significantly more than others, investigation finds

Public sector bodies such as local authorities, Government departments and national institutions are spending different amounts on their energy, with some paying significantly more than others, an investigation using freedom of information laws and accounts analysis has found.

Not-for-profit energy consultancy, Box Power CIC, has compiled the first ever league table detailing public bodies, including local councils, who have spent well on energy and others who have not done as well.

These results are put in the public domain for the first time as we believe the public have the right to know how their money is being spent. The table is known as the Box Power CIC League Table. The figures provided cover the period March 2022 to March 2023 and are compared to the UK council average of 32p for power and 9p for gas.

The results show:

- How The Royal Household faced a 95% (£1.3ml) increase compared to 2021/22.
- How councils like Essex & Warwick with similar usages to the Houses of Parliament are paying 200% more!
- Of the £1,800,000,000 spent across these 230 councils how £500,000,000+ was an overspend compared to if they had bought with the bottom 25%.
- How £180,000,000+ was extra if they had just bought with the average of all councils.
- How central Government avoided a £500-mll extra hit by not paying the prices the councils achieved.
- Which council in the North West has faced a 400% gas cost increase.
- The embattled HS2 rail line spent £500,000 on energy last year.

But on average, public institutions such as the British Library, Ministry of Defence and the BBC hedged effectively despite increases. The Metropolitan Police spent £22 million on energy last year, up from the £16 million it paid for in 2021/22. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs paid £27 million for energy last year, up on the £19 million it paid the year before. The Department for Work and Pensions also saw an increase on the energy it paid; up from £27 million in 2021/22 to £40 million in 2022/23.



The picture is mixed for local authorities. The results show Manchester City Council spent more than £76 million on energy, which includes both electricity and gas, in the year to March 2023, paying more than £38 million over the average of what all councils spent. The amount they've paid is up more than 400 percent on 2021 to 2022.

Birmingham City Council saw a big increase on its energy costs: from £14 million in 2021/22 to £32 million in 2022/23; that's despite its usage being similar.

Meanwhile, Essex County Council and Warwick District Council, who both have similar usages to the Houses of Parliament, paid 200 percent more than what the Houses of Parliament paid in 2022/23. Durham County Council paid £34 million for their power in 2022/23, up on the £17 million paid in 2021/22; that's despite their usage being similar.

All councils in Scotland fared better than their English counterparts, buying about 25 percent cheaper than them.

Corin Dalby, CEO of Box Power CIC, says: "These results are the first deep dive we have of what Government departments, public bodies and local authorities have been spending on their energy.

"They present an interesting picture of what public bodies are spending on their energy and how this has changed from 2021/22 into 2022/23.

"Some public bodies did not want to reveal their results, which we find particularly intriguing. But nonetheless, we have presented those who have been open.

"And that's what this is about: transparency in the public sector when it comes to energy buying. We know factors such as the war in Ukraine have affected energy costs, pushing them up, but we issued our own warning about prices before this happened.

"The public would be keen to know what public bodies and local councils have been spending on energy, given the ongoing cost-of-living crisis and rise in domestic energy costs."

Please check out the full spreadsheet for full results, including each UK local authority and a number of other public bodies.

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Editor's notes:

About Box Power:

Founded in 2014, Box Power CIC is the UK's first philanthropic not-for-profit energy consultancy for business. In 2021, Box Power donated £800,000 to north-west charities. Box Power have won the following current awards:

- Telca "Do the Right Thing" Award.
- Federation Small Business Community Award.



- Box Power Chief Executive Corin Dalby was named Businessperson of the Year in the 2023 Manchester Evening News Business Awards.